

Operations Other Than War: Where Are We Heading"

CSC 1995

SUBJECT AREA - Operations

United States Marine Corps
Command and Staff College
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2076 South Street
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Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MILITARY ISSUES
PAPER
AY 1994-95

Title: Operations Other Than War: Where Are We Heading?

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Date: 18 April 1995

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'There is a sad lack of authoritative texts on the methods employed in small war... The future opponent may be as well armed as they are; he will be able to concentrate a numerical superiority against isolated detachments at the time and place he chooses; as in the past he will have a thorough knowledge of the trails, the country, and the inhabitants...'1 SMW 1-6 p.8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 1995		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-1995 to 00-00-1995	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Operations Other Than War: Where Are We Heading				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) United States Marine Corps, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA, 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 17	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

TITLE: Operations Other Than War; Where are We Heading

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Date: 1 April 1995 PAGES: 20 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The purpose of this research paper is to examine how to enhance the military's conduct of Operation's Other Than War (OOTW). One characteristic of the United States (U.S.) involvement, when it has been drawn into Operations Other Than War, previously called Low and Mid - Intensity Conflicts, is that it performs poorly, at least at the onset. In order for the military planner to understand OOTW better, this paper highlights the events that led to OOTW being incorporated as a means to accomplish the National Military Strategy of "Enhancement and Engagement". It will examine how inter agencies throughout the U.S. government do not properly interoperate to provide support to the lower and upper ends of the spectrum from civilian/military involvement to solely military involvement in those cases just short of war. As this is the background, historical cases will be provided to clarify problems that have occurred in the past and actions taken or in many cases not taken to improve diplomatic relations and military operations. From these principles, recommendations are made that can enhance the effectiveness of future United States Marine Corps (USMC) actions in 'Operations Other Than War'.

INTRODUCTION

The Cold War is over. The world is no longer a neat orderly playing field where a line is drawn between definitive antagonist powers in black hats and protagonist in white hats. In fact the hats now appear to be more gray than a specific color.

Throughout the globe, boundaries drawn establishing Nation States during the decline of the colonial era are now deteriorating due to ethnic and cultural clashes. Population growth is continuing to rise beyond many third world nation's desire or capacity to support such as we see in Somalia, Rwanda, and Latin America.

More than seventy-five percent of this rapid rise in population growth will migrate to or is already located within one hundred miles of a coast, the littorals of the world.

Drug trafficking will continue to rise as long as there is a demand. Much of the demand resides within the Continental United States (CONUS). As long as this demand increases, it could ultimately lead to the degradation of societal values as has been evidenced with robberies and slayings within our borders, which have involved all levels of our society.

At one time the United States boasted that terrorism would not be found within its borders. Recent examples, such as the World Trade Center bombing and thwarted attempts on prime facilities in New York City such as the United Nations (U.N.) building, have opened some eyes to the fact that this can happen in the U.S. Initial steps to counter terrorism require targeting the terrorist abroad. Waiting until it is brought to our borders is not countering terrorism but is then considered anti terrorism.

Combating the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction, nuclear, chemical, and biological, poses a major threat to the United States interests. Therefore we must train to locate and counter the proliferation of these weapons.

To paraphrase a quote from a Marine Corps Intelligence Activity briefer, Captain Harry Frank, "... with no specific enemy, chaos will be the norm, at least for the foreseeable future".² The need for a Strategy of Nuclear deterrence, though it cannot be totally put aside, is now in a secondary role.

What then has become the primary role of our national strategy? The answer depends upon how the reader interprets the 1994 National Security Strategy of 'Enlargement and Engagement' statement which follows:

Not all security risks are military in nature. Transitional phenomena such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, environmental degradation, rapid population growth and refugee flows also have security implications for both present and long term American policy.³

The above, though not all inclusive, equals operations that the United States Military will be involved in one form or another short of war, or as termed today Operations Other Than War (OOTW).

The debate on whether OOTW is a misnomer is not relevant. Therefore this author will attempt not to divulge into that arena other than to remind the reader that the fire team leader receiving rounds in this environment may not be compelled to consider it other than war.

What the author will attempt to do is point out areas that need to be addressed by the hierarchy in both the civilian and military in order to prevent a lack of capability in combat readiness. The Marine Corps must maintain the ability to transition from one end of the OOTW spectrum to the other with a minimum amount of atrophy in required skills, during a period of significant draw down in personnel, equipment, and training funds. This will be done by examining and comparing the skills

required to operate in OOTW as well as shed light on the need to operate with a high degree of cohesion with the civilian organizations involved.

BACKGROUND

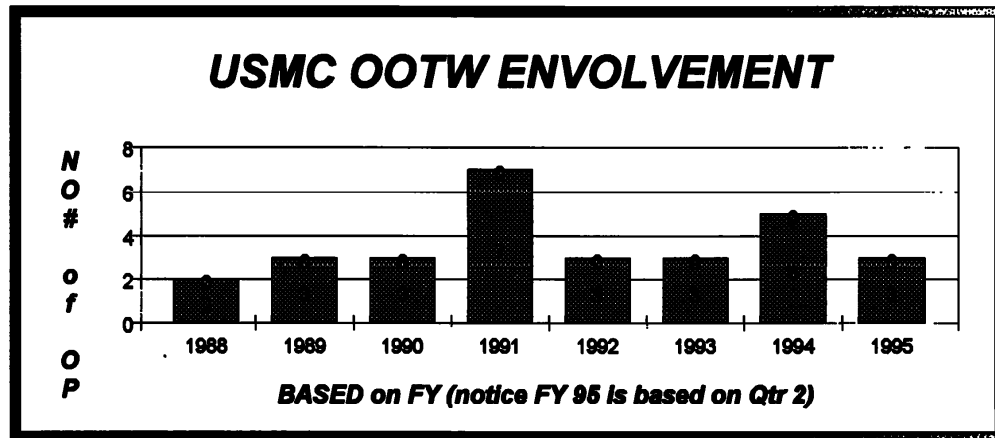
Is this a shift in thought or is the National Security Strategy in support of new National desires? Clearly, as seen in the new strategy, it is not new. History repeats itself, as a National Policy of involvement in operations such as these have been in the United States interest since the early 1800s when President Monroe sent a loud message to the European powers, known as the 'Monroe Doctrine', that there would be no more European colonies in the western hemisphere. Later followed the Manifest Destiny of the 1840s and the Roosevelt Corollary of the early 1900s. These documents legitimized the further advancement of United States to the west and south through force via military international police powers.⁴

With all this previous experience in small wars, why then does it appear that, at least initially, the United States performs poorly in OOTW?

Two well versed authorities on the subject, Noel Koch and Neil Livingstone, recently pointed a finger at the inability of our civilian and military leadership to reorganize assets and reorder priorities to meet the future challenges in order to be more successful in prosecuting OOTW.⁵ This is partially true, as the end of the Cold War became the catalyst for the draw down of our military forces. The strategy was changing from that of forward defense to one of forward presence. However we failed to reconstruct our doctrine and in so doing we have been deficient

in focusing our priorities for drawing down. Therefore the draw down's design remained predicated on the Cold War military.

Figure one provides a pictorial of how this organization has been employed over the past eight years. Notice that even though there is a current draw down in the USMC base force, there has not been a reduction in requirements:



(Fig. 1)

Another dilemma at the operational and tactical levels could be aimed at the warriors refusal to accept the fact that our military force, Desert Storm withstanding, has been generally involved in OOTW. At face value, OOTW does not connote to the warrior spirit nor does it relate itself to an understandable enemy doctrine as pointed out by the retired Lieutenant General Bernard Trainer,

A template mentality prevailed, and military study groups sought a single formula universally applicable to theme contemptible little wars. Unfortunately, this gave rise to the phrase "low-intensity conflict," which is used loosely by many to describe any conflict short of World War III. The term gives the impression that non-NATO wars are something a reinforced corporal's guard can handle. Of course, nothing could be farther from the truth.⁶

In recent times media involvement has been the first indication that intervention will be needed to resolve a conflict

or provide assistance to a nation or nations in need. This is not to say that the military intelligence community has no prior knowledge that there has been a crisis in an area, in fact in most cases they are well aware. Rather, it is an indication that our leadership may have trouble determining what is a national vital interest and what is not. A key component in the United States 1994 National Security Strategy is values and therefore values are considered a vital interests. In that light, involvement of our forward deployed assets, to assist in restoration of order or to provide some form of humanitarian assistance such as with the Kurds in Northern Iraq during 'Provide Comfort' and the Somalians during 'Provide Relief', will probably increase.⁷

In as much as the "Cold War" is in the past and this is the future of our global commitment, we must continue to prepare ourselves for the eventualities of OOTW.

Once the State Department has made a decision that a nation is in crisis and requires some form of assistance, and given the normal emergency status of that crisis, the closest military organization is called upon to initiate that aid. As the USMC maintains forward presence year round in CENTCOM, EUCOM and PACOM, it is normally called upon as the military force of choice to encounter a crisis, due to an oppressed nations austerity and proximity to the littorals. Some recent examples are Fiery Vigil during the Mount Pinatubo crisis in the Philippines and Sea Angel during the typhoon caused floods in Bangladesh.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing the services required is not the problem at the

strategic or operational level, it is the amount of unplanned operations and maintenance funds (O&M Funds) expended. The loss of these training dollars sorely atrophies the over all readiness of not only the Corps but also our sister services.

As pointed out by General George A. Joulwan, CINC U.S. European Command, in an article in Defense 94;

I am particularly concerned about the impact of unplanned and unbudgeted contingency operations on operating accounts, training and the quality of life for our troops and their families.⁸

The capability at the operational level that the United States is most seriously deficient in coping with OOTW is the absence of a mechanism to integrate the various federal agencies that work with the economic, political, social, and military infrastructures within these third world nations.

A 1986 final report of the Army-Air Force Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Project stated the following:

A comprehensive civil-military strategy must be developed to defend our interests threatened by the series of low-intensity conflicts around the globe. It must be crafted in comprehensive terms, not focused on a single conflict or single department. It must integrate all the national resources at our disposal, military and nonmilitary, lethal and nonlethal.⁹

How can the United States Military, the Department of State, and other assistance organizations integrate their operations to be more proficient in the execution of all levels of OOTW? One answer is chartering a comprehensive study to identify all assets/capabilities available to ensure that the military and civilian assets, money, and organizations are integrated. This would lead to a better economy of effort through understanding how dissimilar organizations can enhance the fluidity of operations toward a common goal. Patience, a not to common

characteristic of the American citizen, their military, and their civilian bureaucracies, would be a requirement in order for this research to be accomplished.

Waiting for a study to be sanctioned and completed will be time consuming and unproductive at least for near term commitments. To paraphrase a comment made by Lieutenant General Anthony Zinni, Commanding General I MEF, during a meeting with Majors at HQMC, when asked for recommendations on preparing for future OOTW missions "You would enhance your professional knowledge in this area by not only inviting military personnel to speak on this subject but also individuals from the state department and those other assistance providing organizations to provide their views. Those who have walked the walk..."¹⁰

STAFF TRAINING

Therefore, establishing a series of cosponsored Professional Military Education (PME) classes with the Department of State and in the USMC appears to be warranted. With the Department of State, we can establish a PME successful program giving the individual unit a broader view of the subject. This program should be geared to preparing, through education, both the military and civilian organizations.

Second, Table top exercises, similar to the Crisis Interaction Exercise (CIREX) conducted between the deploying Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)) staffs and the Joint Special Operations Capable (JSOC) staff should be established. This could be done during the planning phases for one of the Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercises (MEUEX) conducted during Phase II of the MEU(SOC) pre-deployment training. As the MEU(SOC) has been billed as an enabling force

for follow on military forces, so to should it be considered an enabling force for follow on civilian relief assistance organizations.

During these table top exercises, external coordination initiatives could be established between the governmental and non governmental agencies that may be called upon in a crisis. Agenda that should be discussed range from security, communications, to logistics support requirements. As many of the non governmental agencies provide unique levels of assistance, so to do they have specific agendas that need to be met. Establishing these exercises as an initial forum where these agenda items can be versed would relieve some of the friction that might other wise occur during an actual crisis situation. Likewise establishing the means to provide timely security information throughout the OOTW chain of humanitarian effort would be helpful. The following is a proposed schedule for Peace Table Top Exercises during MEUEXs:

Peace Table Top

0800 - 1130 Presentation of the Military/State

Department/Assistance agencies capabilities

1100 - 1200 Cosponsored presentation of scenario

1200 - 1300 Break

1300 - 1400 Study by organizations of scenario (Recommended order of the following presentations would be by precedence of first in to the theater by last)

1400 - 1500 Military Briefing

1500 - 1600 State Department Briefing

1600 - 1700 Assistance Agencies Briefing

1700 - Wrap up Peace table top

MCCDC could take the lead for this program by establishing liaison with both governmental and non governmental agencies likely to be involved in these exercises. The liaison would be used to establish the ground at which a scenario could be provided.

Obviously this is not enough time to conduct what should be done for operational continuity but at least it would be a conduit to phase III, Command and Field Post Exercises (CPX)s.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING

Basic training of the individual marine and the small units should not be changed. The basic infantry training provided to each marine, whether officer or enlisted, meets the essential basic skills required for all spectrums of OOTW and war. However, as pointed out earlier, there are immeasurable categories of missions and dilemmas that our marines face in OOTW. Obviously, there are too many variations than can be specifically trained to, therefore this author offers the following training as a guide additional to the basic training presently required.

First, continuous intelligence updates would be beneficial to the individual marines to ensure they are aware of the area, the culture, the political implications, and the environments of future conflicts/crisis situations. These updates should be in addition to the normal troop information classes.

In addition to intelligence preparation of the marines, an intense program of both dry and live fire skills should be provided. As units are normally much more dispersed in OOTW than in conventional war scenarios, the importance of immediate

control by junior Non Commissioned Officers (NCO)s and their personal influence on the psychological well being of each marine and sailor in their charge is much more prevalent. Due to time constraints, many life and death decisions, often under strict "Rules of Engagement" (ROE), must be made in the absence of the direct control of superiors.

Keeping that in mind, the following training evolutions are offered to ensure marines have an opportunity to make judgment calls prior to being placed in a position to do so in the real situation. The following drill is titled ROE Dry Fire Exercises:

First, a brief situation should be provided to the marines and sailors being evaluated. This situation should place them in a position to make judgment calls in accordance with the ROEs that have been assigned. The drills should place the marines and sailors in Observation Post (OP)/Listening Post (LP) and patrolling situations. In most cases the scenarios should present the evaluated with the most drastic situation, shoot or no shoot decisions. Remember no matter what the senior leadership may feel at the time the final judgment call will be made by the young marine at the business end of his weapon. It is imperative that he make the right call.

This training should be followed with live fire shoot or no shoot drills. Obviously the scenarios should encompass the ROE or likely ROE that maybe imposed. These skills should be built on the ability to hit what is aimed at, not only during the day time, as depicted during the required annual qualification, but also through the use of night firing skills.

'The rifle is an extremely accurate shoulder weapon. in the hands of an expert rifle shot (sniper) it is the most important weapon of the combat

units. Other infantry weapons cannot replace the rifle. The rifle is exceedingly effective in the type of fire fight connected with small wars operations.'11

As before, a brief situation should be provided to the marines and sailors being evaluated placing them in a situation to make judgment calls in accordance with the ROEs that have been assigned. The training should again place the marines and sailors in OP/LP and patrolling situations. In most cases the scenarios should present the evaluated with the situation of shoot or no shoot decision making. As before the final judgment call will be made by the junior leader with his weapon. It is imperative that he make the right call.

To ensure the live fire drills provide a specific indicator as to the ability of the shooter to hit his aggressor, goals should be established. The fact that the decision to shoot in these environments normally will come at close range supports a recommended goal of 85% hits at night progressively from 25 - 50 meters using the double tap method of firing from all positions. This is not only attainable but should be a requirement given that the ROE often requires the marine in jeopardy to positively identify that his aggressor has a weapon and is maneuvering in an aggressive manner towards his position. Given the fact that the decision to shoot in these environments will normally come at close range, with a limited ability to fire more than a double tap response, a specific skill level needs to be assigned in order to ensure the highest probability that a return of rounds will not occur from the aggressor. This should be used as an indicator to the unit leader as to whether the individual should be in the field or not during contingency situations.

'To make the practice realistic will require much ingenuity and skillful

planning but there is no other method of training that will develop effective combat teams. Combat practice firing presents the nearest approach to actual battle conditions that is encountered in the whole scheme of military training. Exercises should be so designed that leaders are required to make an estimate of the situation, arrive at a decision, issue orders to put the decision in effect, and actually supervise the execution of orders they may issue. The degree of skill and teamwork of the unit is shown by the manner in which the orders of the leaders are executed. The conservation of ammunition should be stressed in all combat practices.'12

These drills are primitive in requirements for external support. Any unit, whether deployed or in CONUS, can practice in most any area they are assigned to. The reader needs to understand that these drills are designed to provide his/her marines the skills to make correct judgment calls not only to ensure that national interests are maintained but more importantly to ensure the ideal of 'self preservation' of the individual marine is understood and that they are capable of providing for the preservation of those in their charge.

CONCLUSIONS

Service men and women killed in action is less acceptable today than ever before. Preparing service personnel for their role in OOTW is essential. It does not require a complete shift in philosophy of basic training. Our basic training requirements are satisfactory for preparing personnel for advanced training as long as it is geared for the environments that they are most likely to be employed. As depicted in fig. 1, the vast majority of our future commitments will be in environments short of war (OOTW).

Problems occur when OOTW leads to either a complacency or over excited attitude to the environment in which these individuals are placed. A perfect example was the fratricide

incident where two U.S. Army SH-60s were shot down over Northern Iraq by U.S. Air Force F-15s. It is incumbent upon the leaders at all levels to be well aware of everyone in their charge and their ability to handle the situation that they are being placed, not only daily but hourly.

Though the United States has been involved in Small Wars almost since its initiation, it never took as serious a view in handling these situations as it has today. Mistakes are no longer acceptable. To avoid mistakes, the senior civilian and military leadership must provide appropriate doctrinal direction for the separate services and civilian organizations to train properly for OOTW.

The Marine Corps has made great strides in planning and exercising by providing instructional teams such as the Marine Air-Ground Staff Training Program Team (MSPT). Possibly providing OOTW scenarios at the MEU(SOC) and Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level on a routine basis would enhance these organizations as they prepare to provide assistance in these areas.

Further, an evaluation of the Battle Skills Test (BST) maybe in order. Though all the tests required are legitimate, possibly some additional tests, similar to those described in recommendations above, would be warranted in an annual examination.

Whether liked or not, the idea of Operations Other Than War is not new. In fact, if the services would be wise enough to research past documents they have written, such as the Army's manuals for the Indian wars, developed following the inception of the 'Manifest Destiny', and the USMCs' Small Wars Manual,

developed following its incursions in Latin America and the Caribbean islands they may well find information provided that would aid in preparation of future doctrine.

NOTES

- 1 Small Wars Manual (United States Printing Office Washington, 1940), sect 1-6, p 8
- 2 Henry Frank, (Instructor MCIA comment during briefing on the 'USMC Threat 1995-2005), 23 Jan 95
- 3 President William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, the White House July 1994, (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1994), 1
- 4 Gary A. Nash, American Odessey, (Westville Ohio: MacMillan/MacGraw-Hill Publishing Company 1992)182
- 5 Loren B Thompson, Low-Intensity Conflict, (Toronto: Lexington Books 1989), x.
- 6 LtGen Bernard E. Trainer, Marines and third World Conflicts, (Marine Corps Gazette, Nov 1988), 49-50
- 7 President William J. Clinton, A National Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, the White House July 1994, (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1994), 5
- 8 Defense 94, Issue 3, (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1994) p 17
- 9 Army-Air Force Joint Low - Intensity Conflict Project 1986; Final Report, 5-6
- 10 LtGen Anthony Zinni, lecture to HQMC Majors on OOTW, Jun 1994
- 11 Small Arms Manual, (U.S. Printing Office Washington, 1940), sect 4-2, p 5
- 12 Small Wars Manual, (U.S. Printing Office Washington, 1940), sect 4-2, p 6

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